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DE RUEHNY #0646/01 2951308
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 221308Z OCT 09
FM AMEMBASSY OSLO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7904
INFO RUEHCP/AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN PRIORITY 2557
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY 0559
RUEHSM/AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM PRIORITY 3431

C O N F I D E N T I A L OSLO 000646

SIPDIS

FOR EEB/TPP/MTAA/ABT (ANN RYAN), OFFICE OF THE COUNSELOR
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/21/2019
TAGS: [EAGR](#) [EAID](#) [ETRD](#) [PREL](#) [NO](#)
SUBJECT: NORWAY: FOOD SECURITY MOVED UP AGENDA DUE TO U.S.
INITIATIVE

REF: STATE 107298

Classified By: Acting Deputy Chief of Mission Cherrie Daniels for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

11. (C) Summary: The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) responded positively to our initiative on food security, while being wary about potentially developing new institutions or trust funds to address the issue, and expressing curiosity about how we would address challenges of "country-led" planning. Directly in response to our initiative, the MFA Development Section is conducting an internal review to clarify Norway's policy on food security. The Norwegians are very likely to support reftel's proposal at the November 16 World Food Security Summit, but they would like to make sure that any action plans on food security put appropriate emphasis on the importance of fisheries. End summary.

OUR INITIATIVE RAISES THE PROFILE
OF FOOD SECURITY IN THE MFA

12. (C) Poloff met with Mette Masst, Senior Advisor in the Development Section of the MFA. Masst stated that she has been designated as contact person in the MFA on food security, largely in response to the raised profile of the issue due to the U.S. initiative. Moreover, the Minister of Environment and International Development, Erik Solheim, has requested an internal review of Norwegian food security policy, which Masst is currently drafting. In Norway, development policy is controlled through the MFA. There is no separate "development ministry," as such, in Norway, although there is a minister (Solheim) who has that as one of his portfolios. Therefore, Foreign Minister Stoere and Environment and Development Minister Solheim both work through the MFA on international development issues. (Minister Solheim also has a separate Environment Ministry).

13. (C) Masst said that one of the reasons the internal paper was commissioned is that Minister Solheim's emphasis has been somewhat different than prior MFA policy. Solheim, Masst said, has "adamantly" emphasized achieving gains in agricultural productivity (i.e. yields per acre) as opposed to more general food infrastructure issues such as land rights which the MFA has prioritized for some time. Masst emphasized that there was no "contradiction" between these priorities. She also said that, as a small country, Norway attempts to engage in bilateral development aid only where it has expertise to contribute, and agricultural development and food security is not currently perceived to be one of those areas. Therefore, she expected Norway's contributions in this area to be to multilateral institutions.

14. (C) In response to our letter and proposal (which were also delivered directly to the office of Foreign Minister Stoere), the Consultation Document, and reftel talking points, Masst had generally positive comments. She stated that Norway commends not just the substance of our initiative, but the way it has been structured, the way it has been rolled out consultatively (including the letter/demarche itself), and specifically its emphasis on country-led plans. She pronounced our approach consistent with Norwegian values. She said she fully expects to the proposal to be supported by Norway as a document that informs the World Food Security summit declaration at the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) meeting in Rome November 16-18.

AREAS OF CONCERN

15. (C) Skeptical of new institutions: While Masst applauded our willingness to work through multilateral institutions, she said Norway would be "skeptical" of new trust funds, or institutions, used to finance or implement food security initiatives. New institutions, she said, take many years to set up (she mentioned the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria as an example) and there is an inevitable process of bureaucratization. Norway would prefer to work through existing multilateral institutions like the FAO, she advised.

16. (C) Worries about "country-led" programs: Stating it was a "delicate issue" and further stating that she "felt a little odd" saying it to the USG, Masst said that while Norway certainly approved of country-led programs as a matter of development philosophy, she questioned their track record

of efficacy. Specifically, she said that African governments have failed in developing their agriculture sectors, and most "capacity building" has confined itself to the ministries, bureaucrats, and motorpools in the capitals, with little impact on actual farmers, and without building the enormous infrastructures needed to increase agricultural productivity.

She said she knew we were aware of these obstacles -- and spoke positively of the results orientation of the Millennium Challenge Corporation -- but stated she was simply wondering how our initiative would address this challenge inherent in extolling country-led processes. These processes, she commented, have historically meant inefficient state control of research and extension programs. She said establishing proper incentives for the private sector must be a crucial part of effective agricultural development.

17. (C) Fisheries: Masst noted that in the September 26 meeting in New York, one participant raised the issue of whether fishery management was going to be included as a key aspect of food security. Masst commented that while the U.S. mentioned it in our talking points in the context of other environmental concerns, the issue did not have a prominent place in our consultation document. Given the number of people who make their livelihoods from or derive their protein from the sea, and given also the alarming decline in fish stocks, fisheries should be an important part of any global food security conversation.

18. (C) Investment Plan Countries: Masst said that while the needs of "Pre-Investment Plan" countries are self-evident, one of the questions which occurred to her in reading the Consultation Document is what sort of large scale investments "Investment Plan countries" would receive: private-sector investments, or something like traditional development aid. She understood that our Consultation Document was preliminary, but said that this would be one of the big questions that would need to be addressed.

19. (C) Attendance on November 16: Although currently not finalized, the Norwegian plan is to send Environment and Development Minister Solheim to Rome for the conference, but Masst worried that "several neighboring countries" would only send their ministers of agriculture -- something Masst found inappropriate, due to their presumed domestic rather than

international or development focus.
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